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BURNLEY RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

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ANNUAL REPORT of Dr. H. J. ROBINSON, Medical Officer of
Health, for the Year ended 31st December, 1918.

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TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE BURNLEY
RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report for the year
ended December 31st, 1918.

The area of the district is 41,774 acres.

During the last two or three years the Registrar General has
furnished the figures representing the estimated population of
the district, and for the year under review the death rate has to
be calculated upon a population of 16,874, and the birth rate
upon a population of 18,907.

Instructions have again been received from the Local Govern-
ment Board asking Medical Officers to curtail their Annual Reports
as much as possible.

BIRTHS.

The total number of births registered is 227 (males 108, females
119). Of these, 4 males and 6 females were illegitimate. The
birth rate is therefore only 12·00 per thousand of the estimated
population.

<i>Rate for</i>	<i>Rate for</i>	<i>Average for</i>	<i>Decrease</i>	<i>Decrease</i>
<i>1918.</i>	<i>1917.</i>	<i>ten years,</i>	<i>on previous</i>	<i>on ten year's</i>
<i>—</i>	<i>—</i>	<i>1908-1917.</i>	<i>year.</i>	<i>average.</i>
12·00	14·6	17·9	2·6	5·9

This year's rate is again the lowest on record, and for the
first time is below the death rate, which cannot be other than
unsatisfactory.

DEATHS.

The number of deaths from all causes and actually belonging
the district is 247 (males 118, females 129) as against 246 (males
120, females 126) for the previous year.

This is equivalent to a death rate of 14·6 per thousand of the
population, and is 2·6 higher than the birth rate.

<i>Death rate</i>	<i>Death rate</i>	<i>Mean of</i>	<i>Increase</i>	<i>Increase</i>
<i>for 1918.</i>	<i>for 1917.</i>	<i>ten years,</i>	<i>on 1917.</i>	<i>on ten years'</i>
<i>—</i>	<i>—</i>	<i>1908-1917.</i>	<i>—</i>	<i>average.</i>
14·6	14·2	12·8	0·4	1·8

Having regard to the high mortality from Influenza throughout the country, and which was very severe in this district, it is very satisfactory that the death rate should be so low and only 0·4 higher than the previous year.

The following Table shows the causes of death. For the purpose of comparison I also give the figures for the year 1917, showing the increase or decrease as the case may be.

Cause of Death.	1918.			Total for 1917.	Increase.	Decrease.
	Males.	Females.	Total.			
Enteric Fever	—	1	1	1	—	—
Small Pox.....	—	—	—	—	—	—
Measles.....	3	—	3	4	—	1
Scarlet Fever	—	—	—	—	—	—
Whooping Cough.....	—	—	—	2	—	2
Diphtheria and Croup.....	—	1	1	2	—	1
Influenza	12	27	39	3	36	—
Erysipelas	—	1	1	—	1	—
Pulmonary Tuberculosis.....	6	9	15	12	3	—
Tuberculous Meningitis	1	1	2	10	—	4
Other Tuberculous Diseases	3	1	4	—	—	—
Cancer, Malignant Disease	8	7	15	15	—	—
Rheumatic Fever	—	1	1	1	—	—
Meningitis.....	—	1	1	—	1	—
Organic Heart Disease	16	16	32	41	—	9
Bronchitis.....	6	9	15	19	—	4
Pneumonia (All Forms)	10	11	21	21	—	—
Other Respiratory Diseases	1	—	1	5	—	4
Diarrhoea, &c.....	1	—	1	2	—	1
Appendicitis and Typhlitis	—	2	2	—	2	—
Cirrhosis of Liver.....	1	—	1	1	—	—
Alcoholism	—	—	—	—	—	—
Nephritis and Bright's Disease...	4	4	8	9	—	1
Puerperal Fever	—	1	1	—	1	—
Parturition, apart from Puerperal Fever.....	—	3	3	—	3	—
Congenital Debility.....	5	2	7	12	—	5
Violence, apart from Suicide	5	3	8	8	—	—
Suicide	2	—	2	2	—	—
Other Defined Diseases.....	30	26	56	74	—	18
Diseases Ill-defined or Unknown	4	2	6	2	4	—
Totals ...	118	129	247	246	51	50

It will be noticed Influenza accounted for 39 deaths, organic heart disease 32, pneumonia 21, bronchitis 15, pulmonary tuberculosis 15, and cancer 15.

The greatest increase was due to Influenza, there being 36 more deaths than in the previous year.

44 deaths occurred in institutions, etc., outside the district. There were 17 inquests held.

INFANTILE MORTALITY.

Of the 227 children born, 18 (12 males and 6 females) died during the first year of life. 3 of these were illegitimate (2 males and 1 female). The infantile mortality rate is therefore 79 per thousand births.

<i>Rate for</i> 1918.	<i>Rate for</i> 1917.	<i>Average for</i> <i>ten years,</i> 1908-1917.	<i>Decrease</i> <i>on previous</i> <i>year.</i>	<i>Decrease</i> <i>on ten years'</i> <i>average.</i>
—	—	—	—	—
79	109	111	30	32

It is very gratifying that the infantile mortality rate is so much below the average, and it is to be hoped that this low figure will still further be reduced in the near future.

NOTIFICATION OF BIRTHS.

No action was taken during the year with regard to the appointment of a Health Visitor, as the County Council will no doubt be taking the matter up. As a matter of fact at the time of writing this report the County Council have appointed a Health Visitor for a large portion of the area, including the townships of Altham, Hapton, Huncoat, Read, Simonstone, Sabden, Higham, and Dunnockshaw.

A copy of each birth notification is sent to the County Medical Officer of Health. The Health Visitor subsequently visits the houses where the births have occurred and gives the necessary advice to the mothers.



SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT.

WATER SUPPLY.

No new schemes have been carried out. The water supply for the major portion of the district is good.

I have frequently mentioned in previous reports that an adequate supply of water is needed for the village of Roughlee. This would probably have been carried out long ago had it been possible to obtain labour and materials at a reasonable cost.

SEWERAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL.

All the large townships are well sewered and provided with efficient means for the disposal of the sewage.

As stated in previous years, sewerage and sewage disposal schemes are required at Higham and Wheatley Lane. The

drains in these villages are very antiquated and insanitary, and it is impossible to have these remedied until the villages are sewered.

CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.

The majority of the dwelling houses have either waste water or clean water closets. Where privies are converted, clean water closets are insisted upon, as they are much more sanitary than waste water closets. There are still several tank and pail closets in existence, especially in the villages of Wheatley Lane and Higham. These will be converted as soon as the sewerage schemes are carried out. Rapid progress has been made during the past seven years with conversions, almost all the privies in the large villages of Worsthorpe and Foulridge being abolished and w.c's substituted. Last year, however, owing to the difficulty in obtaining materials and labour, no work of this description has been executed.

SCAVENGING.

All the townships are scavenged by the Council's own vehicles and labour with the exception of Blacko, Foulridge, Ightenhill, and portions of Habergham Eaves, which are scavenged by contract,

Dunnockshaw is the only township where the nightsoil and house refuse are removed by property owners.

The following summary shows the quantities of house refuse and nightsoil removed. These figures only relate to the work done by the Council's employees.

	Ashpits emptied.	Ash Bins emptied.	Privy Pails emptied.	Privy Tanks emptied.	Loads of Ashes removed.	Loads of Nightsoil removed.
Briercliffe and part of Reedley	4568	7087	3543	405	731	563
Hapton and Huncoat.	1940	9482	8008	15	917	293
*Altham, Simonstone, Read, and part of Northtown	528	5918	4417	117	574	269
Sabden, and part of Northtown	524	4665	3488	18	544	212
Old Laund Booth, Barley, Higham, Goldshaw Booth, Roughlee, and part of Reedley	787	2384	10564	648	444	1058
Worsthorpe, Cliviger, Habergham Eaves.	948	9350	9148	359	824	662
Totals ...	9295	38886	39168	1562	4034	3057

*Owing to not having a permanent carter, no records kept for the last three months of the year.

The Contractors have done their work satisfactorily, but I am sorry to report that in two areas, viz., Hapton and Huncoat, and Simonstone, Read and Altham, which are scavenged by the Council's men, the work was not so regularly carried out during the latter months of the year as in the past. In the month of September the carter in each area had to join H.M. Forces. After their departure it was almost impossible to obtain substitutes, the consequence being that the work was neglected. On many occasions nightsoil was not removed for a period of three weeks, whereas it is usually removed each week. This state of affairs was very unsatisfactory. But most Local Authorities were in a similar predicament, and the work had to be done on many occasions by transferring carters from other areas.

The Altham carter has been demobilised and has returned to his duties, and a carter has been obtained for Hapton, so that the work is now proceeding smoothly.

The refuse is disposed of by filling up disused quarries, etc.

The tip in the village of Briercliffe will last probably about 12 or 18 months. After it is filled there are no other tips available. There are small destructors on the market suitable for small townships, and I am of opinion that it will be necessary for the Council to consider the provision of a destructor at an early date.

Considerable difficulty is now experienced with regard to the disposal of nightsoil. A few years ago it was scarcely necessary to ask farmers for permission to deposit it on their land. In one or two cases they refused to allow us the use of refuse tips because by mistake other farmers had received the nightsoil. All this is now changed. Several times recently farmers have positively refused to have it on their land, especially at Cliviger. In order to dispose of it, it has to be carted a considerable distance, and this is a costly matter.

As the villages get sewered and the privies become converted to water closets, the quantity of nightsoil will decrease to a large extent.

Owing to the difficulty in getting dust bins and sanitary pails, the Council secured a permit from the Ministry of Munitions to obtain a small supply. These have been disposed of to property owners when the latter desired them.

SANITARY INSPECTIONS OF THE DISTRICT.

16 written complaints were received. All were immediately attended to.

67 informal notices were issued to owners of premises where nuisances existed. No statutory notices were served.

The number of nuisances abated is 160, principally defective drains, dust bins, and sanitary pails.

It being impossible to obtain materials except at an exorbitant cost, also labour, no improvements of any magnitude have been effected.

There seems to be a disposition on the part of property owners to do as little as possible in carrying out suggested improvements to their property while the Rents Restriction Act, which came into being at the outbreak of war, is in force.

It has been frequently pointed out to me by property owners that, although the price of everything else has increased, they have not been allowed to increase rents, and they could not afford to execute repairs beyond abating serious nuisances.

As Medical Officer of Health, the question of rents does not, of course, come within my province. But I have noticed that certain persons who have all their money invested in property and have only a limited income derived solely from house rents are not as ready to spend money upon improvements as they were prior to the war.

MILK SUPPLY.

Inspections of dairies and cowsheds have been made as usual. The shippens generally are limewashed at the proper times.

No large improvements have been effected.

Several farms in the district have changed ownership during the year. Your Inspector has spent much time visiting the farms with the new owners and arranging for alterations to be effected to make the cowsheds up-to-date from a sanitary point of view.

As a result of these visits the owners have undertaken to make extensive improvements as soon as conditions permit. At some of the farms new cowsheds will be erected.

BAKEHOUSES.

There are 13 bakehouses registered. All were found clean. No complaints have been received from H.M. Factory Inspector.

SLAUGHTER-HOUSES.

One new slaughter-house licence was granted.

The slaughter-houses have not been used for slaughtering purposes, as the butchers obtained their meat from the Government Slaughter-house in Burnley.

INSPECTION OF FOOD.

The amount of food condemned and surrendered is as follows ;

1 carcase beef.
 456 lbs. potatoes.
 20½ lbs. butter.
 28 lbs. margarine.
 146 eggs.

HOUSING.

No of Dwelling-houses inspected for purposes of the Housing Acts	4
Dwelling-houses unfit for human habitation	4
Representations with a view to making Closing Orders	1
Closing Orders made	1
Dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied without making Closing Orders	—
Dwelling-houses put into a fit state of habitation after making Closing Orders	—
Dwelling-houses demolished	—

One of the above-named houses was in a wretched condition both structurally and as regards cleanliness. It is really surprising that people will live in such hovels when better houses are available. In this instance there was absolutely no excuse for the tenant, because decent houses were vacant in the village not very far distant. It is such cases as these that makes one wonder what will happen when new housing schemes are carried out. The new houses, I take it, are intended for persons with families such as the above-mentioned, but I am afraid some of them will be reluctant about taking them. And, if they do, drastic action of some kind will be necessary to compel them to keep the dwellings clean and to deter them from damaging the property.

I quite agree that good houses are necessary and should be provided. But as to who should live in them when they are erected is a matter which will, in my opinion, require careful consideration, unless some means are devised to compel certain tenants to do their share towards looking after the property in a proper manner. It might be said, of course, that the Medical Officer and the Sanitary Inspector should make it their business to see that the dwellings are kept clean. This is quite right in the majority of cases, but there are just a few in each township where it is almost impossible to get them to be clean no matter what action is taken by the Sanitary Authority or their officials. I have before suggested that it would be well if one could use a hose-pipe upon some houses and people alike.

Quite recently an owner purchased two new dust-bins, which are now very expensive. The tenants, instead of using them for their legitimate purpose, converted them to another use altogether, the ashes being deposited in the backyard.

In one particular township a few years ago your Inspector requested certain property owners to fix new windows. They acceded to his request. But it is only on very rare occasions that these particular windows are seen open.

I am not in these remarks trying to defend and support property owners, as they ought to keep their property in good structural repair. Yet at the same time I wish some of the tenants would do their share also.

The other three houses which were closed were converted to lock-up shops.

There are many vacant houses in some of the townships.

Particulars were again supplied to the Local Government Board respecting the number of new dwellings required in the district.

PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER ACUTE INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

Notifications received during the year are as follows :—

Diphtheria and Membranous Croup	...	...	...	1
Erysipelas	...	...	...	9
Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	12
Enteric Fever	...	...	...	4
Puerperal Fever	...	...	...	3
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	...	...	...	3

Total ... 32

The figures for the previous year were :—

Diphtheria and Croup	...	...	...	11
Erysipelas	...	...	...	8
Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	19
Enteric Fever	...	...	...	4
Acute Poliomyelitis	...	...	...	1

Total ... 43

There is therefore a decrease of 11 cases on the year.

This is the lowest number of notifications ever received.

The average for 10 years is 82·8. This year's figure is therefore 50·8 below that average.

Distribution during the twelve months :—

	Scarlet Fever.		Diph- theria.		Enteric Fever.		Erysipelas.		Ophthal- mia.		Totals.
January.....	—	...	—	...	—	...	3	...	—	...	3
February	—	...	—	...	—	...	1	...	—	...	1
March	1	...	1	...	—	...	—	...	1	...	3
April	—	...	—	...	—	...	—	...	—	...	—
May	—	...	—	...	—	...	1	...	—	...	1
June	5	...	—	...	—	...	—	...	—	...	5
July	1	...	—	...	2	...	—	...	—	...	3
August	1	...	—	...	—	...	1	...	—	...	2
September.....	3	...	—	...	2	...	—	...	1	...	6
October	1	...	—	...	—	...	2	...	—	...	3
November	—	...	—	...	—	...	1	...	—	...	1
December	—	...	—	...	—	...	—	...	1	...	1
Totals.....	12	...	1	...	4	...	9	...	3	...	29

SCARLET FEVER.

The cases of Scarlet Fever occurred in the undermentioned townships :—

Briercliffe, 7 ; Read, 4 ; and Worsthorpe, 1.

There were no deaths. All the cases were of an exceedingly mild type.

DIPHTHERIA.

The only case of Diphtheria notified was at Foulridge.

Anti-toxin is supplied free of charge.

ENTERIC FEVER.

The four cases of Enteric Fever occurred at :—

Roughlee, 1 ; Briercliffe, 1 ; Simonstone, 1 ; and Huncoat, 1. There were two deaths.

Exhaustive enquiries were made but no information was obtained as to the origin of the disease.

ERYSIPELAS.

Erysipelas was reported from Sabden, 4 ; Huncoat, 3 ; Briercliffe, 1 ; and Hapton, 1.

OPHTHALMIA NEONATORUM.

Huncoat, 2, and Altham, 1 are the townships where the cases occurred. These were at once reported to the County Medical Officer.

MEASLES.

There were 353 cases of Measles notified from the undermentioned townships :—

Briercliffe, 20 ; Habergham Eaves, 1 ; Simonstone, 22 ; Read, 53 ; Hapton, 80 ; Sabden, 29 ; Northtown, 7 ; Huncoat, 5 ; Worsthorpe, 46 ; Reedley, 6 ; Altham, 10 ; Dunnockshaw, 8 ; Barley, 3 ; Roughlee, 1 ; Cliviger, 49 ; Higham, 7 ; Foulridge, 2 ; Blacko, 3 ; and Ightenhill, 1.

38 cases were notified by parents, the remainder by Medical Practitioners.

Owing to the prevalence of Measles I had to recommend the closure of the following schools :—

Church of England School, Worsthorne, from 18th February to 8th March.

Council School, Worsthorne, from 25th February to 15th March.

Hapton Church of England School (Infants') from 4th March to 29th March.

Hapton Council School (Infants') from 4th March to 29th March.

Simonstone School, from 11th March to 28th March.

Holme School, from 14th March to 28th March.

Worsthorne Church School (Infants') from 13th March to 28th March.

Altham School, from 9th April to 19th April.

Read Church School, from 9th April to 19th April.

Holme, from 9th April to 19th April.

Mereclough, from 9th April to 19th April.

The Infants' Department of Roughlee School was closed from the 11th March to the 28th March owing to the prevalence of Whooping Cough.

The epidemic death rate for 1918 was 0·35 In 1917 it was 0·63. The average for 10 years is 0·71. The decrease on the previous year is 0·28, and the decrease on the ten years' average, 0·36.

All houses are disinfected with formalin where infectious diseases occur, with the exception of measles. It is impossible to disinfect every house in a rural area where measles exists during an epidemic.

16 houses were disinfected during the year.

The four cases of Enteric Fever were removed to Hospital. Two of these cases died at the Hospital.

The other infectious cases were isolated and treated at home.

INFLUENZA.

The outstanding feature as regards public health was the serious epidemics of Influenza which prevailed throughout this country and practically over the whole world.

The first epidemic in this district commenced very suddenly at the magneto works at Hapton. On Monday morning, June 10th, over 30 persons left work ill. This firm employed 130 hands, 15 of whom were absent when work commenced at 6 a.m. Several left work at 7 a.m. Others left at different periods during the day, and on the following day 47 employees were absent.

This, apparently, was the beginning of the epidemic, for it quickly spread throughout the adjoining districts.

Fortunately we only had one death during that epidemic.

The second epidemic, which commenced in October, was much worse than the first. In October there were 2 deaths, November 18 and December 14. 3 cases were removed to hospital.

The following schools were closed for the undermentioned periods owing to the prevalence of Influenza :—

Altham	16th Dec. to 20th Dec.
Simonstone	16th Dec. „ 20th Dec.
Read Church School	3rd Dec. „ 20th Dec.
Dunnockshaw Council	9th Dec. „ 20th Dec.
Dunnockshaw Church... ..	9th Dec. „ 20th Dec.
Foulridge	9th Dec. „ 20th Dec.
Sabden Council	9th Dec. „ 20th Dec.
Sabden Catholic	9th Dec. „ 20th Dec.
Read Congregational	4th Dec. „ 20th Dec.
Mereclough	2nd Dec. „ 6th Dec.
Holme	25th Nov. „ 6th Dec.
Foulridge	26th Nov. „ 6th Dec.
Blacko	21st Nov. „ 29th Nov.
Worsthorne Council	18th Nov. „ 29th Nov.
Worsthorne Church	18th Nov. „ 29th Nov.
Mereclough	18th Nov. „ 29th Nov.
Wheatley Lane	18th Nov. „ 22nd Nov.
Fence	18th Nov. „ 22nd Nov.
Holme	11th Nov. „ 22nd Nov.
Briercliffe	12th Nov. „ 22nd Nov.
Dunnockshaw Council	11th Nov. „ 22nd Nov.
Newchurch	6th Nov. „ 15th Nov.
Fence	5th Nov. „ 15th Nov.
Wheatley Lane	5th Nov. „ 15th Nov.
Briercliffe	4th Nov. „ 8th Nov.
Hapton Council	1st July „ 5th July
Hapton Church	27th June „ 5th July
Huncoat Council	27th June „ 5th July

During the first epidemic it was only necessary to close three schools, viz., those in the villages of Hapton and Huncoat.

The two schools at Higham and Roughlee were not much affected and it was not necessary to order their closure.

The townships where the deaths occurred are: Foulridge, 9; Blacko, 1; Roughlee, 1; Old Laund, 3; Briercliffe, 8; Cliviger, 4; Habergham, 2; Ightenhill, 1; Reedley, 1; Worsthorne, 1; Sabden, 1; Read, 1; Huncoat, 1; Higham, 1. The remaining four died outside the district.

The following figures show the age periods of the deaths:—

2 to 5. 5 to 15. 15 to 25. 25 to 45. 45 to 65. 65 and over.

—	—	—	—	—	—
1	4	5	19	7	3

PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER TUBERCULOSIS.

Number of Primary Notifications received from Medical Practitioners, Form A (particulars of which are given hereunder) 16. Last year the number was 24.

	<i>Males.</i>		<i>Females.</i>		<i>Total.</i>
Cerebral Meninges...	—	...	1	...	1
Lungs	5	...	6	...	11
Knee	—	...	1	...	1
Cervical Glands.....	—	...	1	...	1
Peritoneum.....	1	...	1	...	2
Totals ...	6	...	10	...	16

7 notifications were received from Medical Officers of Sanatoria, as follows :—

High Carley ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Bull Hill ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Meathop ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Aitken ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Luneside ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Total ...									7

The number of patients admitted into Sanatoria in the previous year was 4.

7 persons were discharged from the undermentioned Sanatoria :

High Carley ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
Bull Hill ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Aitken ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Meathop ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Shelf ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Total ...									7

A copy of each notification has been sent to the County Medical Officer of Health.

As in former years, I beg to acknowledge and thank the Clerk, Surveyor, Inspector, and all the members of the Council for their hearty co-operation and support, which have been continuous and helpful.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

H. J. ROBINSON,

12th May, 1919.

Medical Officer of Health.